

SHALL THE JEWISH SABBATH BE CHALLENGED TO SUNDAY?

The All-Absorbing Topic in Judaism at Present—The Most Prominent Rabbis of America Express Through the Journal Their Views on the Time-Hallowed Tenet.

BOLD DECLARATION OF DR. EMIL G. HIRSCH.

Within another decade I expect to see practically every Jewish congregation in the country worshipping on Sunday. It is in the natural order of things that they come to it. * * * In Chicago, before we dropped our Saturday services, the attendance got down to three people—the sexton, the organist and myself. That was ten years ago. Now our congregation numbers between 1,000 and 2,000, representing 500 families.

ORTHODOX VIEW OF DR. M. HELLER.

The Sunday service has no appeal whatever to the religious sentiments of the Jew. In my opinion a Saturday service before an observant congregation is the only one affording religious satisfaction to the Jew at heart. It is a pessimistic age and the outcome of the fermentation as to the Jews' position is beyond dividing. I prefer a same Saturday Sabbath to a religiously empty Sunday Sabbath.

"NO COMPROMISE," SAYS DR. LEVY.

There can be no compromise between the Sabbath of the Decalogue and the first day of the week for the Jew. * * * Any attempt to substitute Sunday for Saturday will undoubtedly prove disastrous to the best interests of Israel. * * * It is a positive violation and takes from religion that one element which proves the devotion of its followers, to wit: That religion must be a matter of sacrifice and not of convenience.

The most important question in the Jewish Church of America at present is the Sabbath question.

Until recent years Judaism has clung tenaciously to the observance of the Mosaic Sabbath. Saturday, the seventh day of the week, has been kept sacred as a day of rest and abstinence from all work, from the day when Moses thundered the law from Mt. Sinai in the Wilderness through more than thirty centuries, even through the last nineteen hundred years of the dispersion.

Now this time-hallowed tenet is menaced, and Sunday, the first day of the week, which Israel always regarded as a day of labor, is stealthily usurping the Sabbath. The change is an intrinsic part of the reform movement in Judaism. The radical leaders predict that within a decade it will undermine the strongholds of orthodoxy; just as the so-called higher criticism of the scriptures first, but surely overthrowing the dogmas of orthodox Christianity.

Dr. Emil G. Hirsch, rabbi of Sinai Congregation, of Chicago, declares boldly: "Within another decade I expect to see practically every Jewish congregation in the country worshipping on Sunday."

The Sabbath question is the all-absorbing topic in the Jewish pulpit at present. It was also discussed at the Rabbinical Conference which was held in Cincinnati during the past week. That there is still a wide diversity of views in Israel in this matter is obvious from the following statements which the Journal has secured from the leading rabbis of America:

DR. HIRSCH CHAMPIONS SUNDAY SERVICES.

The first proposition to hold services in Jewish synagogues of the Christian Sabbath was made by Mr. Samuel Hirsch, my father, in Germany, in 1846. He argued, before a conference of rabbis, that under the conditions the Jews lived it was difficult to keep the day set down in the Decalogue. It was a question of man's duty to his family and his business as against his duty to his religion. He maintained that it mattered not which of the seven days was set apart for worship and rest from business and pleasure, so long as one day in the week was thus kept. He looked very far into the future, and finally secured a compromise by which services were held both on Saturday and Sunday. One church in Germany has ever since maintained its Sunday service.

Within another decade I expect to see practically every Jewish congregation in the country worshipping on Sunday. It is in the natural order of things that they come to it. * * * We want the mass of Jews to attend church we must hold our services when they can come. This is especially true with reference to young men. In some of the Eastern cities where there are many retired business men I understand the Saturday services are pretty well attended. But generally speaking the reverse is the case.

In Chicago before we dropped our Saturday services, the attendance got down to three people—the sexton, the organist and myself. That was ten years ago. Now our congregation numbers between 1,000 and 2,000, representing nearly 500 families.

EMIL G. HIRSCH, D. D.,
Rabbi of Sinai Congregation, Chicago.

DR. SILVERMAN FAVORS A SUNDAY SABBATH.

Sunday services supplemental to the Sabbath services have been introduced into many congregations and have been instrumental in affording such men and women an opportunity to attend religious worship and obtain religious instructions who would otherwise be deprived thereof.

In New York our experience has been exceedingly gratifying. Far from wrecking the love of Jews for the historical Sabbath, the Sunday services have awakened many Jews to a realization of their duty to the House of Israel.

While they find themselves compelled by those peculiar conditions of American industrial life to be reluctantly absent from the Sabbath services, they would never consent to their abrogation, and would strenuously oppose any substitution of Sunday for Sabbath.

In some communities where efforts are made by sensational lectures on ethics to draw men away from religion, it is advisable to establish regular Sunday services in order to counteract such efforts.

JOSEPH SILVERMAN, D. D.,
Rabbi of Emanuel Congregation, New York.

SUNDAY FOR STUDY, SAYS DR. BOIKOWITZ.

The Jewish Sabbath is a permanent institution, consecrated by all its history and traditions as an universal and everlasting spiritual influence for Israel. To tide over present conditions, to meet the actual needs of the living present, to conserve the religious life of our generation, it is a duty to provide instruction and inspiration for this degraded hour every day is holy and every honest method is sacred. The most pressing need of the times is a great renaissance of interest in Jewish knowledge. Ignorance of Israel's great part is the greatest sin of this generation. One can-

not be enthusiastic and self-sacrificing for something he knows not. To awaken this enthusiasm I conduct on Sunday morning in my congregation, supplementary to the regular Sabbath service, a series of popular Bible talks of an informal character. They are in line with the plans for popularizing Jewish knowledge laid down by the Jewish Chautauquan Society, of which I have the honor of being the executive officer.

HENRY BOIKOWITZ, D. D.,
Rabbi of Philadelphia and Chancellor of the Jewish Chautauquan.

DR. HELLER UPHOLDS THE SATURDAY SABBATH.

I held Sunday service some years ago while in Chicago. At present, living in the South, I find a Friday evening service more practicable. They are both make-shifts and unsatisfactory.

The Sunday service has no appeal whatever to the religious sentiments of the Jew. The Friday evening service is a self-deceptive substitute for a Sabbath.

In my opinion a Saturday service before an observant congregation is the only one affording religious satisfaction to the Jew at heart.

It is a pessimistic age, and the outcome of the fermentation as to the Jews' position is beyond dividing.

For my part, can only accept submissively the part assigned by Providence to my generation, a part in which we have the more choice between logical and historical consistency.

I prefer a same Saturday-Sabbath to a religiously empty Sunday-Sabbath.

M. HELLER, D. D.,
Rabbi, of New Orleans.

DR. AARON ADVOCATES TWO DAYS' SERVICES.

I have children's services in my temple on Sunday morning, which are largely attended by adults also. I deliver a discourse on that day. I see no objection to holding services on Sunday, and believe the plan to be a good one. But it must not be a service destructive to the traditional Sabbath. The object of a Sunday service should be to add a prayerful spirit in the community and make love for religion more profound. Sunday services would aid in that, while Saturday has become a secular day in part to the business men at least.

ISRAEL AARON, D. D.,
Rabbi Beth Zion Temple, Buffalo, N. Y.

DR. LEVY WANTS THE DECALOGUE SABBATH.

There can be no compromise between the Sabbath of the Decalogue and the first day of the week for the Jew. The Scriptures say "six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, and any attempt to substitute Sunday for Saturday will undoubtedly prove disastrous to the best interests of Israel."

The only extreme reformed rabbis who are responsible for the Sunday services offer is that Saturday has become a great commercial day of the world.

They say that the male members of society are unable to attend the services, and rather than lose them entirely from the fold of Jewish worship they have substituted Sunday. It is a positive violation, and takes from religion that one element which proves the devotion of its followers, to wit: That religion must be a matter of sacrifice and not of convenience.

In Europe, where the Jews are highly honored and represented, where they occupy high positions socially and financially and intellectually, not a single congregation meets for worship on Sunday. Are the Jews of America superior to those of Europe? For their indifference to their religion, they are more exalted position, than those of Europe?

M. S. LEVY, D. D.,
Rabbi Beth-Israel Congregation, San Francisco.

DR. LAEKER OPPOSES THE MOVEMENT.

I am in favor of the Sabbath as it is set forth in the Bible, from the very first chapter. In this country, where Saturday is the market day, it is difficult for those in mercantile life to attend divine worship. The Sabbath service is always very large as well as devout.

We have a Friday evening service, where those who are unable to attend on Saturday can offer up their devotions. There is no need of a service on Sunday. I do not believe there are more than a dozen congregations in the United States which hold Sunday services, and the only instance of a substitution of Sunday for Saturday is in New York.

RAAPHAEL LAEKER, D. D.,
Rabbi Ohav Sholem Temple, Boston.

DR. MENDES POINTS TO A REMEDY.

For clearness of conception, let these two things be distinctly separated: to hold Sabbath services on Sunday is one thing, to hold Sunday services additional to those on Saturday is quite another. I emphatically believe that while a gifted orator, an excellent preacher, a scholar, a student and fluent English, could draw a large audience on Sunday than on Saturday (the Sabbath), because he knows a congregation of Judaism, the seventh-day Sabbath. He could be a Theist, or some such; preaching a broad, tolerant sentimentality, without shape or form, or consistency. People would tire of that.

I fancy the remedy for empty pews among us is the same as for other denom-

inations. Put brains in your pulpits and put hearts, too, reverent, earnest hearts, who say what they believe and believe what they say; who have a message to the rising generation and will deliver it. And give the poor man a chance in your synagogue or temple, that his poverty may not be felt in his pew. Make your services religious, not dramatic, have good music, but not operatic or super-artistic; sing with the people, not for them. And let all things be done reverently and in order, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

F. DE SOLA MENDES, D. D.,
Rabbi of West End Synagogue, New York.

WORDS OF FIRE OF A PORTUGUESE RABBI.

Sunday service is a cancer that is eating out the heart of Judaism. It gives to Sunday all that Sabbath means, and hence helps to Christianize Jewish life and Jewish homes. We should stand our ground and agitate for the transfer of the Sunday or Christian Sabbath to Saturday, the Sabbath which the Founder of the Christian faith himself kept in obedience to the law which He himself obeyed and which He himself commanded His disciples to obey.

Saturday attendance in the synagogue can be increased when Jewish employers of labor will be true to Jewish instincts of fidelity to the law, and when they set the example of Sabbathly attendance.

The rising generation cannot be interested in a religion if they see respect paid to the law without giving \$20,000 to the poor; getting married in defiance of Jewish law and custom; and without a Jewish minister to consecrate the marriage, marrying Christians and then receiving in their homes such people who do or who countenance such things by their presence. The reforming Jew, the rising generation you speak of, a generation of nominal Jews or unbelievers of "nothingarians."

H. FERREIRA MENDES, D. D.,
Rabbi of Portuguese Synagogue, New York.

A HOLY DISTRIBUTION, SAYS DR. HARRIS.

The Jewish minister cannot ignore the deplorable conditions of to-day. They feel that the fact that there is official recognition of the Sabbath only, that outside of this it is practically unobserved, cannot but have a demoralizing effect upon the Jewish community at large, and tend toward the integration of the Jewish people with the Christian community.

Hence even strong Jewish laymen and clergy are beginning to advocate, not the complete thoroughgoing observance of the Sabbath, but a secondary Sabbath for the benefit of those who cannot keep the recognized day. Considering the change theologically, the orthodox Jew who regards the institution of the seventh day as a divine command in the most literal sense, has no choice but to accept that or nothing. The reformed Jew, who does not share that view in its entirety, feels nevertheless still that the seventh day Sabbath is a sacred institution, centuries of historic association. It has thus become a cardinal principle of the Jewish faith.

Even the reformer then hesitates to tamper with an institution that has taken such deep root in the religious conscience of the Jew.

WALTER H. HARRIS,
Rabbi of Temple Israel of Harlem.

WORK OF PESSIMISTS, SAYS DR. SCHULMAN.

The historical Jewish Sabbath, whatever difficulties may be encountered in its observance, is evidently too deeply rooted in the Jewish conscience to enable it to entertain any notion of the abolition of the Saturday Sabbath or the sanctification of the Sunday as the Sabbath of the Synagogue.

Just as political critics by the very fact of their virtuous indignation frequently exaggerate the extent of the evil they are combating, so the religious critics, measuring everything by the standard of his ideal, is easily apt to drift into the Jerusalem error in speaking of Jewish loyalty still alive.

No doubt the materialistic tendency of the age has made inroads upon the Jews as upon all other ecclesiastical elements of our American life. But considering the peculiar difficulties with which Judaism as a religion of a very small minority has to contend, it is remarkable to observe how much Jewish loyalty still exists.

SAMUEL SCHULMAN, D. D.,
Associate Rabbi, Temple Beth-El, New York.

OPTIMISTIC VIEW OF MR. L. G. BLOOMINGDALE.

The inauguration of Sunday services in many of our Jewish houses of worship is the inevitable outcome of the economic conditions that surround us. Its sole purpose is to draw within the reach of religious influence all those whose secular obligations render attendance at the Sabbath service impracticable.

While it establishes a departure from the traditions of the past, it lacks that significance which is attributed to it in some quarters. It means no conflict between the orthodox and reformed, as it is not intended to disturb the Saturday observance of the Sabbath in any way. It is a direct, direct, however. It does not tamper with the ideals of our faith, but will have the tendency of strengthening the latter by bringing within the fold those who by reason of the inextinguishable conditions of the life of to-day, would otherwise have to do without the religious life of their fathers.

LYMAN G. BLOOMINGDALE.

AVANGUARDISM IN PARIS.

The Gauls of Paris explain that the prevailing Anglomani in that city has affected even the municipal authorities. The city offers to the children in the public schools boxes of letter paper marked "school prize, given by the City of Paris." The paper and envelopes are marked with the arms of the city and are adorned with vignettes representing famous Parisian monuments, but the maker's mark shows that they are English. This is "smart," thinks the Gauls, and wonders if the City Council will be having its line done up in London before long.—Chicago Tribune.

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